

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IV

SUBJECT: MUHAMMAD ALI TOUR

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 059390 SENT ACTION LIBREVILLE,
DOUALA, LAGOS, ABIDJAN, DAKAR INFO YAOUNDE, KINSHASA
MARCH 25, 1974.

QUOTE.

1. NEWS ITEM IN MARCH 25 WASHINGTON POST REPORTS THAT
HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION, GEORGE FOREMAN, WILL DEFEND HIS
TITLE AGAINST MUHAMMAD ALI IN KINSHASA IN SEPTEMBER, IF
FOREMAN WINS MARCH 26 BOUT IN CARACAS WITH KEN NORTON.
IF NORTON WINS HE WILL BE MADE A SIMILAR OFFER. CONTRACTS
FOR THE DOLS TEN MILLION KINSHASA FIGHT HAVE REPORTEDLY
ALREADY BEEN SIGNED.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TITLE MATCH, THADDEUS ARNOLD,
PRESIDENT OF VERDAD, INC., WASHINGTON-BASED TRADE
PROMOTION COMPANY, AND ASSOCIATES MET TODAY WITH DEPT
OFFICERS TO DISCUSS VERDAD'S SIGNED OFFER WITH ROBERT ARUM,
OF ARUM, FRIEDMAN, KATZ OF NEW YORK, LEGAL COUNSEL FOR
MUHAMMAD ALI, FOR A SERIES OF FIVE EXHIBITION MATCHES IN
AFRICA THIS SUMMER OVER A PERIOD OF 20 DAYS UNDER THE
SPONSORSHIP OF VERDAD, INC.

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3. ARNOLD GROUP PLANS TO FILM ALI'S AFRICAN EXHIBITION

TOUR FOR WORLD-WIDE DISTRIBUTION. EBONY MAGAZINE IS

SCHEDULED TO BE INCLUDED FOR MEDIA COVERAGE. ALI WILL TRAVEL WITH A PARTY OF TEN COMPRISED MAINLY OF HIS TRAINERS AND SPARRING PARTNERS.

4. ADDRESSEE POSTS HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY THE GROUP FOR THE EXHIBITION MATCHES. FOR PERSONAL REASONS ARNOLD WILL LAUNCH TOUR IN LIBREVILLE. GROUP PLANS TO DEPART SHORTLY FOR AFRICA TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AND WORK OUT FINANCIAL AGREEMENT ON AN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY BASIS. POSTS WILL BE ADVISED OF ARNOLD GROUP SCHEDULE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. ARNOLD GROUP PLANS TO MEET WITH EMBASSY/USIS OFFICERS TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE (1) IN FINDING LOCAL LAWYER WHO WILL REPRESENT VERDAD, INC.; (2) IN MAKING CONTACT WITH APPROPRIATE LEVEL OFFICIALS AT EITHER MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS, CULTURE AND/OR INFORMATION; (3) IN MAKING SUGGESTIONS AS TO SITE FOR EXHIBITION WHICH WILL ALLOW FOR MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE OF NATIVE POPULATION. BEGIN FYI: KINSHASA FIGHT SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN OUTDOOR SOCCER STADIUM END FYI.

6. DEPT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSIES REACTION TO THE PROPOSED VISIT AND WHAT, IF ANY, SPECIAL PROBLEMS SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED. RUSH

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